20
GATEWAY RPG
POLICE
Written by: Curt Simcox

GATEWAY RPG

Written By: *Curt Simcox*

Illustrations: AI-Generated

Why AI Art? *Since its inception,* ***GATEWAY RPG*** *has been a passion project developed by a Solo creator and offered entirely for Free. As a one-person operation without a production budget, AI tools were utilized to provide a visual experience that would otherwise be financially impossible. My goal is to keep the game accessible to everyone without compromising on the atmosphere. I know this might deter people and that is ok, but at least it's out in the open with good intent.*

Produced By: Aurican's Lair

www.auricanslair.wordpress.com

This free rulebook is available for download at the following locations:

https://gatewayrpg.wordpress.com/

https://gatewayrpg.itch.io/gateway-rpg-rules

https://www.drivethrurpg.com/en/product/209636/gateway-the-free-d20-tabletop-roleplaying-game

For any questions about this game, please email: *gateway*rpg@yahoo.com

For News and Updates, follow Gateway RPG on Social Media at the following:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/GatewayRPG/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/gatewayrpg/

BlueSky: https://bsky.app/profile/gatewayrpg.bsky.social

Special Thanks:

Dominick Barnabei

Jeff Stevens

Andrew Daniels

Pancho MB

Justin Handlin

Derek Elliott

Heather Bee

Cameron Miller

Sionainn T. Mac Innéirghe

Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Aurican's Lair or also following the guidelines of the Open-Source Agreement by Wizards of the Coast.

Copyright © 2017

A Short Dedication

To the Storytellers

To my **family and friends**, who provided the foundation. To my **players**, who provided the soul. And to **you**, who now carries the torch forward.

This book is dedicated to everyone who believes that a few dice, some paper, some pencils, and a group of friends can change the world, even if just for an evening.

Welcome to GATEWAY RPG!

Contents Within This Rulebook

Chapter 1: Introduction ---------- pg. 5

Chapter 2: Character Creation ----------pg. 7
- Answering Character Questions
  - Example Questions
- Character Race, Archetype, and Abilities
- Character Archetype Example:
- Scenario Example of Using Fire Magic
- Proficiency and Deficiency Traits
  - Proficiency and Deficiency Options
- Character Traits
  - Character Traits and Corresponding Abilities
  - Using Character Traits
- Other Character Creation Options
- Ability Checks
- Character Creation Variants
  - Option 1: Rolling Stats
  - Option 2: Point Buy
  - Option 3: Standard Array
- Weapons
  - Versatile Melee Weapons (Optional)
  - Weapon Damage
- Armor Class (AC)
- Hit Points (HP)
  - Calculating Hit Points
- Special Abilities
- Character Examples
- Character Advancement Options:
- Basic Level Up System (Optional)
  - Experience Points (XP) or Session Milestones
  - Standard Rules - Level Up Rewards

Chapter 3: Playing the Game ----------pg. 17
- Difficulty Class (DC)
  - Difficulty Class Example
- Ability Checks
- Contested Rolls
- Saving Throws
  - Saving Throw Conditions
    - Blinded
    - Charmed
    - Deafened
    - Falling Prone
    - Frightened
    - Grappled
    - Paralyzed
    - Poisoned
    - Restrained
    - Stunned
    - Unconscious
- Advantage and Disadvantage Rules
  - Proficiency Interactions
  - Double Advantage or Disadvantage
  - Advantage and Disadvantage Guidelines
- Critical “Successes” and “Fails”
- Initiative and Combat Rounds
- Actions in Combat
  - Primary Action Options
  - Bonus Action Options
- Combat Example
- Combat Damage

(Continued) Chapter 3: Playing the Game ----------pg. 22
- Critical Hits
- Critical Failures
- Reaching "0" Hit Points
- Recovering Hit Points
- Using Miniatures (Optional)
- Size
- Movement Speed
- Attack Range
- Basic Vehicle Rules
  - Vehicle Stats
  - Example Vehicle Stats
  - Operating Vehicles
  - Chase Rules
  - Damage and Repairs
  - Example Scenario

Chapter 4: Game Master Tips and Guidelines ----------pg. 26
- Know the Rules
- Flexible Rule Interpretation
- Helping Players Create Characters:
- World Building
- Adventure Building
- Creating Non-Player Characters and Monsters
- Creating Balanced Combat Scenarios
- Tailoring Encounters
- Non-Combat Scenarios
- Encouraging Player Involvement in Storytelling
- Meaningful Decisions
- Character-Driven Plotlines
- Interactive NPCs and Environments
- Player-Led Scenes
- In-Game Rewards and Recognition
- The "Rule of Cool"
- Avoid Metagaming
- Handling Conflict
- Encouraging Roleplaying
- Feedback and Improvement
- Rewarding players with the “Basic Level Up System (Optional)”

Chapter 5: Advanced Play Variants ----------pg. 32
- Advanced Character Sheet
- Character Creation Point Allocations
  - Point Allocation Guidelines
- Alternative Hit Points
  - Hit Points Calculation
- Advanced Character Example
  - Example Scenarios
- Advanced Damage Values
- Advanced Variant Level System (Optional)
  - Experience Points (XP) or Session Milestones
  - Advanced Rules - Level Up Rewards
- Conclusion

Standard Rules Character Sheet ---------- pg. 37

Advanced Rules Character Sheet ----------pg. 38

Quick Reference Guide ----------pg. 39

Legal ----------pg. 40

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Welcome to GATEWAY RPG

Imagine a world where a roll of the dice can decide the fate of states, kingdoms, or even galaxies. Your voice becomes the blade, the spell, or the cunning scheme that changes everything.

Welcome to **GATEWAY RPG**, a streamlined, story-first tabletop roleplaying game that lets you jump straight into the action without flipping through hundreds of pages.

Whether you're a **Newcomer** exploring the world of roleplaying games or a seasoned **Game Master (GM)** looking for a flexible, no-fuss system to bring your worlds to life, GATEWAY is your launchpad.

What Makes GATEWAY Different?

GATEWAY is a rules-lite roleplaying game inspired by the **classic d20 systems** like **Dungeons & Dragons®** and **Pathfinder®**, but without the baggage of endless charts or confusing mechanics.

It keeps the core ideas you love such as character stats, dice rolls, and thrilling combat, while trimming the rest to keep the game fast, fun, and focused on storytelling.

Some mechanics are based on the **D&D 5e SRD®** and are used under the **Open Gaming License** (see the **Legal section** at the back of this book).

What's the Purpose of GATEWAY?

This system was built with one mission in mind: to **make tabletop roleplaying more accessible**.

Whether you're brand new to tabletop RPGs or a GM tired of slogging through rulebooks, GATEWAY is designed to be **easy to learn**, **quick to play**, and **endlessly flexible**. It's the perfect system for:

- **One-shots and short campaigns**
- **Converting ideas from other systems**
- **Teaching new players the ropes**
- **Story-driven sessions that prioritize creativity over complexity**

If you prefer deep mechanics and rule mastery, this may not be the system for you. But even then, you might still enjoy how quickly it gets a story off the ground.

What Kinds of Stories Can I Tell?

Any kind you want!

From **High Fantasy** to **Grimdark Steampunk**, **Gritty Cyberpunk** to **Cosmic Horror**, **Modern Espionage Thrillers** to **Galaxy-Spanning Sci-Fi Space Opera**, GATEWAY RPG gives you the tools to tell any story in any setting. GMs/Players are not limited to swords and sorcery. If they can dream it, they can play through it.

Game Masters can easily homebrew rules or settings to fit their vision.

How Does a Game Session Work?

Here's how a typical session plays out:

1. **The Game Master (GM)** sets the scene, whether it's a dark alley, a monster-infested ruin, or a tense political negotiation.
2. **Players describe their characters' actions** in response, such as sneaking, fighting, talking, or investigating.
3. **Dice are rolled** to determine success or failure.
4. **The GM narrates the outcome**, and the story evolves naturally from there.
5. **Repeat** - every action leads to the next twist in the tale.

Gameplay typically flows through three main types of scenarios:

- **Exploration** (navigating the world or interacting with environments)
- **Social Interaction** (talking to NPCs, making decisions)
- **Combat** (structured encounters with clear goals and stakes)

How Do Players Make Characters?

Players build their characters around six classic traits: **Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom,** and **Charisma**.

Traits influence everything from Skill Checks to Combat. Characters can have: **Proficiencies**, which grant **Advantage** on certain rolls and **Deficiencies**, which impose **Disadvantage**.

Full character creation rules are found in the **"Character Creation" section**. It's quick and simple, designed to get you into the game fast.

How Does the Dice System Work?

GATEWAY relies on the **d20 - the iconic twenty-sided die** - for everything from swinging swords, shooting guns, to negotiating with space aliens.

Players roll a d20 and add any relevant modifiers, and the GM explains what happens.

***Two key mechanics**:*

- **Advantage: Roll 2d20 and take the higher result** (used when your character is skilled or the situation is favorable)
- **Disadvantage: Roll 2d20 and take the lower result** (used in tough or unfavorable conditions)

Proficiencies and **Deficiencies** automatically trigger these effects. Advantage and Disadvantage do not stack. If both apply, they cancel each other out.

Damage, **Hit Points**, and **Spell Effects** are simplified or resolved narratively. There's minimal math, unless you add to it using "**Advance Play Variants"** seen further on. And yes, **Natural 20s** and **Natural 1s** still deliver that same thrill of triumph or dread of failure.

What's the GM's Role?

The Game Master (GM) is the heart of any GATEWAY RPG session. As the GM, they are the **storyteller**, **referee**, **world-builder**, and often the **voice** of every character and creature that the players encounter. They craft the stage, set the tone, and breathe life into the world, but they never control the story alone. Instead, they guide it, shaping and responding to the unpredictable actions of the players.

GATEWAY is designed to give GMs the **Freedom** they deserve. The system provides structure where it's needed, but never boxes a GM in. They are encouraged to **adjust rules**, **create new ones**, or **even toss some out entirely** if it helps the story flow better. There's no wrong way to play.

Chapter 2 - Character Creation

In the GATEWAY RPG system, creating a character starts with a simple conversation between the player and the Game Master (GM). Describe your character idea, keeping in mind the setting or theme of the game. The GM will guide you through the process, helping to assign appropriate proficiencies, deficiencies, traits, weapons, special abilities, and items by the end to the character sheet provided with the game.

Answering Character Questions

To shape your character, the GM can ask the players a few straightforward questions. These questions help determine the character's fit within the game's setting. This should be an open discussion to ensure the character aligns with the game's world and the player's vision.

Example Questions

- What race/species is your character?
- What type of character are you? A Knight, Sorcerer, Cowboy, Thief, Space Wizard, etc.
- What type of weapons do you use?
- What do you think your character excels in?
- What do they lack in?
- Do they have any special powers/abilities?
- What type of background do they come from?

Character Race, Archetype, and Abilities

Use your imagination to create characters that fit into a specific race and/or archetype based on the game setting and the GM's guidelines. From these descriptions, you can infer traits and abilities without needing a detailed list of what the character **can** or **cannot** do.

Character Archetype Example

If a player wants to play as a Half-Elf Wizard, the GM will ask a few questions to clarify the character's magical abilities. Based on the player's description of their preferred magic type, the game can proceed with the player rolling dice for the relevant Character Trait to determine if the spell is successfully cast. This approach keeps the process simple and focused on the narrative.

Scenario Example of Using Fire Magic

Our Half-Elf Wizard has chosen to specialize in Fire Magic. During their turn, they will describe the type of fire magic they are using, such as casting a fireball or creating a wall of flame. They will then roll their die/dice to determine the success of their spell. The exact mechanics for this process will be detailed in a later section.

Proficiency and Deficiency Traits

The Game Master (GM) and player will collaboratively decide which traits a character is Proficient or Deficient in. Each character will have at least one Proficiency and/or Deficiency in their traits, but this can vary based on the GM's discretion (see **"Character Traits"** to the right).

Proficiency grants an **Advantage** on dice rolls, while **Deficiency** imposes a **Disadvantage**. Players should mark a **"+"** next to **Proficient** traits and a **"-"** next to **Deficient** traits. Traits left unmarked will have neither Advantage nor Disadvantage. For more details on how these affect dice rolls, see the "**Advantage and Disadvantage Rules"** section in **"Playing the Game".**

Proficiency and Deficiency Options

- **"+" Proficiency** = A character is proficient in a trait, giving them Advantage on their rolls. They will roll a d20 **twice** and use the **HIGHER** roll.
- **"-" Deficiency** = A character is deficient in a trait, giving them Disadvantage on their rolls. They will roll a d20 **twice** and use the **LOWER** roll.
- **__ Neutral (Blank Trait)** = A character with neither Proficiency nor Deficiency will have **No Bonus** and will only roll a d20 **once, using** the result.

Character Traits

Each player's character is defined by six basic traits: **Strength**, **Dexterity**, **Constitution**, **Intelligence**, **Wisdom**, and **Charisma**.

These traits are used for **Ability Checks**, **Combat Actions**, **Magic Spell Casting**, and **Saving Throws** as detailed in the following chart.

Character Traits and Corresponding Abilities

- **Strength (STR)** = Athletics checks, Melee Combat, Strength Saving Throws
- **Dexterity (DEX)** = Turn Order in Battle (Initiative), Acrobatics, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Hiding, Lock Picking, Piloting (Land, Air, Sea, Mech), Ranged Combat, Dexterity Saving Throws, Determines Armor Class
- **Constitution (CON)** = Constitution Saving Throws, Determines Hit Points
- **Intelligence (INT)** = Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature, Religion, Tech/Computer Use, Streetwise, Intelligence Saving Throws
- **Wisdom (WIS)** = Animal Handling, Insight, Medicine, Perception, Survival, Magic Spell Attacks, Casting Non-attack Magic Spells, Wisdom Saving Throws
- **Charisma (CHA)** = Deception, Intimidation, Performance, Persuasion, Charisma Saving Throws

Using Character Traits

Whenever GM asks the player's character to make a check for any skill, attack, or save, they will use the corresponding Character Trait. If they have Proficiency or Deficiency in that trait, they will follow the Proficiency and Deficiency rules for rolling the appropriate dice. These rolls can also be influenced by **Advantage** and **Disadvantage** *(see "**Playing the Game**" for more details).*

Other Character Creation Options

For faster or more detailed character creation, additional **Character Creation Variants** are provided further on. **Advanced Play Variants** are also available at the end of the book to enhance gameplay.

Ability Checks

Throughout the game, players will use various skills that correspond to the theme or setting. Here are some examples of how these skills can be applied:

Acrobatics
- Freeing yourself from being grappled by something or someone.
- Squeezing through tight spaces.
- Balancing on thin or fragile surfaces without falling.
- Landing on your feet after a fall.
- Tumbling.

Animal Handling
- Calming an unfriendly animal down.
- Controlling a friendly animal to do something.
- Teaching an animal new behaviors or tricks.

Arcana
- Recalling lore about magic items, creatures, and spells.
- Identifying a spell in a scroll, book, item, etc.
- Controlling a magic item or effect.
- Disarming magic traps.
- Identifying spells being cast by enemies.

Athletics
- Climbing.
- Grappling creatures.
- Navigating rough terrains, such as mud, without losing movement.
- Jumping a certain height or distance.
- Swimming in rough currents.

Tech/Computer Use
- Operating or understanding higher technology in the setting.
- Hacking a computer system.
- Implementing a virus into a computer system.
- Overriding or controlling something that is run by a computer.

Deception
- Lying.
- Disguising your emotions.
- Acting like you are dead.
- Passing yourself off as someone else.

History
- Recalling lore about families, events, places, or heraldry.
- Remembering important events in history.
- Telling when or where a certain item was made.
- Noticing a person's origins based on their looks or customs.

Insight
- Identifying whether someone is being deceitful or evasive in their answers.
- Noticing a person's intentions based on their actions.
- Determining if someone is following you rather than coincidentally going in the same direction.
- Understanding underlying messages or hidden meanings.

Intimidation
- Intimidating someone into doing what you want.
- Torturing someone to extract information or compliance.
- Taunting someone into acting violently.

Investigation
- Searching someone (dead or alive) or the surrounding area for clues or deductions that mere sight might miss.
- Seeing through illusions.
- Finding more information about rumors.
- Searching for specific information in a book.

Lock Picking
- Self-explanatory, picking a lock manually using some sort of tools.

Medicine
- Stabilizing someone who is injured or unconscious.
- Identifying symptoms of a specific disease in someone.
- Providing long-term medical treatment for injuries or illnesses.
- Understanding the body's limits regarding a certain physical activity.
- Knowing the dosages and uses for natural healing items, such as herbs or potions.

Nature
- Recalling lore about beasts, plants, terrain, types of vegetation, and weather patterns.
- Knowing the specific plants needed to create certain compounds or potions.
- Identifying poisonous or dangerous food items.
- Harvesting poisons from plants or beasts.
- Detecting unusual or abnormal weather changes.

Perception
- Spotting or hearing hidden threats.
- Recognizing someone from far away.
- Noticing minute details.
- Identifying a source of a noise.

Performance
- Singing.
- Dancing.
- Telling stories.
- Delivering a good speech.

Persuasion
- Convincing someone to do what you want.
- Knowing how to behave appropriately in a given social setting.
- Flattering someone effectively.
- Seducing someone.

Religion
- Recalling lore about deities, temples, or rituals.
- Performing a ritual
- Understanding what actions or behaviors would be offensive to a certain faith.

Sleight of Hand
- Stealing from people without being noticed.
- Placing something on someone without being noticed.
- Concealing belongings on your person.
- Performing gestures or passing messages without being noticed.

Stealth
- Hiding.
- Moving without being heard.
- Blending into a crowd.
- Following someone without being detected.

Survival
- Tracking creatures or people.
- Protecting yourself from weather or terrain hazards, such as sunburn and mosquitoes.
- Finding water in the wild.
- Determining directions, such as knowing which way is North.

Streetwise
- Recalling information about an underground or criminal organization.
- Recalling information about a city or urban environment.

Character Creation Variants

In most roleplaying games, players have several options for determining their character's stats. These stats are then assigned to the **Six Base Character Traits** (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma) according to the player's choice. The methods for generating stats typically include:

- **Rolling Stats:** Rolling dice to randomly determine each stat.
- **Point Buy (Buying Stats):** Using an allotted number of points to purchase stats.
- **Standard Array:** Using a pre-determined set of stats.

Further on you will find variations on how players can build characters using RPG standards, rather than having the Game Master assign Proficiencies and Deficiencies based on the player's chosen archetype.

Note: It is possible to create "unbalanced" characters, such as having all Proficiencies or all Deficiencies.

Option 1: Rolling Stats

Roll a d20 six times and record the outcomes. Consult the provided table to determine if each result corresponds to a Proficiency or Deficiency. Then the player has the flexibility to allocate these outcomes to the Character Traits as they see fit.

- **1-7 = Deficiency Trait**
- **8-14 = Neutral Trait**
- **15-20 = Proficiency Trait**

Rolling Stats Example

STR: 15 = Proficiency
DEX: 3 = Deficiency
CON: 6 = Deficiency
INT: 18 = Proficiency
WIS: 11 = Neutral
CHA: 13 = Neutral

Option 2: Point Buy

Each player is given **7 Points** to allocate among Traits. They can then arrange the points however they like across the 6 Base Traits. Assigning 0 points to a Trait will result in a default of **Deficiency** in that Trait.

- **Deficiency Trait = 0 Points**
- **Neutral Trait = 1 Point**
- **Proficiency Trait = 2 Points**

Point Buy Example

STR: 2 = Proficiency
DEX: 1 = Neutral
CON: 0 = Deficiency
INT: 1 = Neutral
WIS: 1 = Neutral
CHA: 2 = Proficiency

Option 3: Standard Array

This option is the most straightforward. Each player is granted the choice of **1 Proficiency** and **1 Deficiency** to allocate among the 6 Base Traits. The remaining traits will remain as **Neutral Traits**.

Standard Array Example

STR: Proficiency
DEX: Deficiency
CON: Neutral
INT: Neutral
WIS: Neutral
CHA: Neutral

Weapons

Characters have access to a diverse array of weapons for close combat or ranged attacks. To maintain simplicity and a rules-lite approach, these weapons are categorized into three main types of attacks: **Melee**, **Ranged**, and **Magic Attacks**.

*(*Additional bonuses and modifiers can be applied, as detailed in the **"Character Advancement Options"** section.)*

Melee Combat Attacks = Strength Trait
Swords, Daggers, Axes, Katana, Clubs, Laser swords (aka lightsabers), etc.

Ranged Combat Attacks = Dexterity Trait
Crossbows, Longbows, Short bows, Muskets, Pistols, Lasers, Rifles, etc.

Magic Attacks = Wisdom Trait
Fireballs, Lightning, Charm, etc.

Versatile Melee Weapons (Optional)

Occasionally, a weapon may allow the use of the Dexterity Trait instead of Strength when making a Melee Attack. These weapons, known as "**Finesse Weapons**", include items like rapiers, laser swords (aka lightsabers), or katanas.

Game Masters and players can collaborate to determine if a character's weapon can be considered **Versatile**. In such cases, players should mark the weapon on their character sheet to indicate that they should roll their Dexterity Trait when making an attack.

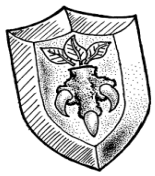
Weapon Damage

To maintain simplicity, each weapon attack will deal a **Fixed Amount of Damage** starting as low as **1 Damage**. No additional dice rolls will be required to calculate weapon damage. ***Exception** - unless modified by a **Critical Hit** or another **Modifier** assigned by the GM, see "**Playing the Game" section further on.***

Alternatively, GMs can choose to use the **Advanced Damage Values** located in **"Chapter 5 Advanced Play Variants"** to add dice rolls to calculate damage.

Armor Class (AC)

Armor Class (AC) represents the difficulty of successfully landing an attack on a character or vice versa. A character's Armor Class is influenced by their **Proficiency** or **Deficiency** in the **Dexterity Trait**. After Character Creation, players can use the following guidelines to calculate their AC:



"+" Proficiency = 14 AC

"-" Deficiency = 10 AC

__ Neutral (Blank Trait) = 12 AC

Bonuses or **Modifiers** to the Armor Class can be added when acquiring new armor or for other reasons determined by the Game Master. *(See **"Character Advancement Options"** for more details)*

Hit Points (HP):

Hit Points (HP) represent a character's resilience and ability to withstand damage before succumbing to defeat. Think of HP as a measure of a character's overall health and vitality.

In line with GATEWAY's fast-paced and simplistic approach, Hit Points (HP) will be kept low.

However, the Game Master has the flexibility to increase HP and Damage values to add challenge or to advance characters in longer campaigns. *(*See **"Character Advancement Options"** for more details.)*

Alternatively, GMs can choose to use the **Alternative Hit Points** located in **"Chapter 5 Advanced Play Variants."**

Calculating Hit Points

A character's **Constitution** is the primary Base Trait that determines their **Hit Points**. After Character Creation, players can use the following guidelines to calculate their HP:

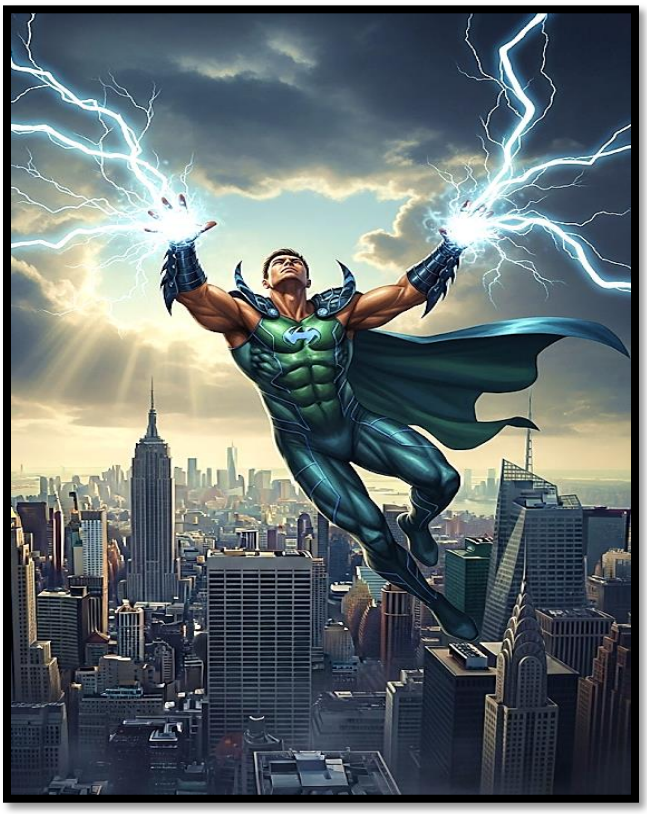
- **Deficiency Trait** = 3 Hit Points
- **Neutral Trait** = 4 Hit Points
- **Proficiency Trait** = 5 Hit Points

Special Abilities

Special Abilities can be defined during Character Creation or developed as the game progresses. A basic example of a special ability is spellcasting. This special ability allows players to describe the spells they cast in general terms, or the GM and player can collaborate to invent spells and mechanics as needed.

However, it is important to keep in mind that adding detailed and complex rules goes against the spirit of this game.

(*The Game Master has the final say and can designate specific mechanics to be used only as **Actions** or **Bonus Actions**, as outlined in the **"Playing the Game"** section.)



Basic Special Ability Examples

- **Fire Magic** - the player can summon fire at will. They can generate small fireballs as attacks during combat.
- **Multi-Attack** - Each combat turn, a player can make an extra Attack Action**.**
- **Sense Danger** - The player has advantage on initiative rolls and cannot be surprised by creatures that use stealth.
- **Multi-Shot** - Each combat turn, a player can choose up to 2 targets within range and make an attack roll against both.
- **Master of Disguise** - The player has advantage on Deception checks made to impersonate someone else. They can perfectly mimic voices they have heard for at least one minute.
- **Ghost Walk** - Once per long rest, as an action, a player can become incorporeal for one turn, allowing them to move through objects and creatures. They cannot attack or be attacked while in this state.
- **Flight** - at will, the player can fly their normal movement speed per turn.
- **Voice of Command** - As a bonus action, a player can command one ally within 30 feet to use their reaction to move up to half their speed.
- **Stone Skin** - Double the amount of HP a character starts with. At each level give double the amount of HP given.
- **Resourceful Scavenger** - When searching for supplies in a desolate area, the player has a higher chance of finding useful items.
- **Iron Will** - The player has advantage on saving throws against mind-altering effects or attempts to control their actions.
- **Empathic Sense** - The player can sense the general emotional state (e.g., angry, sad, joyful) of creatures within 30 feet.

High Fantasy Character Example

Dag “Strong in the Arm”

Level 1 - Dwarf Barbarian

Barbarians excel in combat prowess but may lack intellectual abilities. To reflect this, the Game Master could grant the player's character **Proficiency** in the **Strength Trait**, representing their physical prowess, while assigning **Deficiency** in the **Intelligence Trait**, reflecting their limited aptitude for intellectual pursuits.

Base Traits

- **Strength = “+” Proficient**
- Dexterity = Neutral
- Constitution = Neutral
- **Intelligence = “-” Deficient**
- Wisdom = Neutral
- Charisma =Neutral

Armor Class = **DEX is Neutral = 12 AC**

Hit Points = **CON is Neutral = 4 HP**

Weapons = Great Axe **(Melee and STR Proficiency)**

Space Opera Character Example

Duke Starslayer

Level 1 - Human Space Wizard

Space Wizards are renowned for their mastery of laser swords (aka lightsabers) and their unique abilities through "The Force." In line with this archetype, the Game Master might assign them **Proficiency** in the **Dexterity (AC) Trait,** representing their agility and skill in combat, and the **Wisdom (Magic)Trait**, reflecting their attunement to the mystical powers of The Force.

However, due to their focus on finesse and magical abilities rather than physical resilience, the Game Master could also assign them a **Deficiency** in the **Constitution (HP) Trait**, indicating their lower endurance and durability in combat situations.

Base Traits

- Strength = Neutral
- **Dexterity = “+” Proficient**
- **Constitution = “-” Deficient**
- Intelligence = Neutral
- **Wisdom = “+” Proficient**
- Charisma = Neutral

Armor Class = **DEX is Proficient = 14**

Hit Points = **CON is Deficient = 3 HP**

Weapons = Laser Sword **(Versatile DEX Proficiency**

Character Advancement Options

As a game progresses beyond a single session, players may grow attached to their characters and seek opportunities for advancement. Here are several options that Game Masters can incorporate to provide characters with a boost:

- **Add Modifiers:** Grant +1, +2, or other bonuses to Weapons, Damage output, Armor Class, Hit Points, or other specific Skills. These modifiers can be acquired through items obtained during gameplay, and players add them to their d20 rolls.

- **Grant Proficiency or Deficiency to Items:** Weapons, Armor, or other items can provide Proficiency or Deficiency in certain skills or abilities.

  For example, a magical item may grant Proficiency in Charisma (Intimidation) Checks due to its demonic energy.

- **Awarding Proficiency:** Allow characters to gain Proficiency in a non-proficient Character Trait. Or add a **Proficiency Bonus** of +1 to All Proficient dice rolls.

- **Introduce New Special Powers or Abilities**: For example, a magic user who primarily casts Fire spells may gain the ability to cast Water spells.

- **Upgrade to "Advanced Play Variants":** These variants assign Proficiencies and Deficiencies to specific Abilities, Saving Throws, and Attacks rather than Character Traits. For instance, a character may be proficient in intimidating an enemy (CHA), but deficient in persuading them (also CHA). This adds customization to characters without overly complicating the game. *(*See the **"Advanced Play Variants"** section for more details.)*

- **Basic Level Up System (Optional)**
  In this optional leveling system, players advance from level 1 to level 20 by gaining experience points (XP) through various in-game activities such as combat, completing quests, and roleplaying, or by simply playing a set number of sessions. Each level up provides specific rewards, including increases to hit points (HP), skill modifiers, attack bonuses, and the acquisition of new abilities and spells.

  (See the Level Up Tables on the Next Page)

Experience Points (XP) or Session Milestones

Level	Total XP Required	Sessions Played
1	0	0
2	200	2
3	600	4
4	1,400	6
5	3,000	8
6	6,000	10
7	10,000	12
8	15,000	14
9	21,000	16
10	28,000	18
11	36,000	20
12	45,000	22
13	55,000	24
14	66,000	26
15	78,000	28
16	91,000	30
17	105,000	32
18	120,000	34
19	136,000	36
20	153,000	38

Standard Rules Level Up Rewards

Level	Rewards
1	• Choose Archetype & Traits • HP Based on Constitution • Pick starting Special Abilities or Spells
2	• +1 to one Character Trait • +2 HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
3	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +2 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
4	• +1 to one Character Trait • +2 HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
5	• +1 to All Proficient Rolls • +3 HP • Learn a Powerful Special Ability or Spell
6	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +3 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
7	• +1 to one Character Trait • +3 HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
8	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +3 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
9	• +1 to All Proficient Rolls • +3 HP • Learn a Powerful Special Ability or Spell
10	• +1 to one Character Trait • +3 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
11	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +3 HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
12	• +1 to one Character Trait • +3 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
13	• +1 to All Proficient Rolls • +4 HP • Learn a Powerful Special Ability or Spell
14	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +4 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
15	• +1 to one Character Trait • +4 HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
16	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +4 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
17	• +1 to All Proficient Rolls • +4 HP • Learn a Very Powerful Special Ability or Spell
18	• +1 to one Character Trait • +4 HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
19	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • +4 HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
20	• +1 to one Character Trait • +4 HP • Mastery: Learn a signature ability or spell that defines your character's ultimate power.

Level Up System - Special Notes

- **Abilities and Spells**: Abilities and spells learned at higher levels should scale in power, becoming more impactful and reflecting the character's growth.
- **Customization**: Game Masters can customize rewards to better fit the narrative and the specific class or role of the character.
- **Flexibility**: Players and GMs are encouraged to tailor these guidelines to best fit their campaign and storytelling needs.

This optional level-up system ensures that characters steadily progress in power and capability, offering new and exciting abilities while enhancing their existing skills and attribute.

Chapter 3 - Playing the Game

Gameplay in GATEWAY follows the standard format of tabletop roleplaying games, as outlined in the introduction of this book. The Game Master establishes the scene and engages with players in **Exploration**, **Social Interaction**, or **Combat** scenarios as appropriate.

Players take turns describing their actions and intentions to the Game Master. If the Game Master determines that a check is necessary to determine the success or failure of a player's action, they ask the player to roll the corresponding Character Trait for the action.

The Game Master also sets an appropriate **Difficulty Class (DC)** for the player to roll **equal** to or **higher** than to achieve success.

These rules apply to various situations, including **Attacks**, **Ability checks**, **Spellcasting**, **Special Abilities**, **Contested Checks**, **Combat Turn Order**, and **Saving Throws**.

Difficulty Class (DC)

Calculating a DC (Difficulty Class) involves assigning a single number that represents the challenge level of a task. Here are general guidelines the Game Master will use for determining the DC:

- **Simple (2 to 5):** A task that even a child could accomplish.
- **Easy (6 to 10):** A task that requires some skill but is not difficult.
- **Moderate (11 to 15):** A task that requires significant skill to complete.
- **Hard (16 to 19):** A task that is very challenging, even for skilled individuals.
- **Near Impossible (20):** A task that is almost impossible to achieve.

Difficulty Class Example

Dag, the Barbarian from character creation, wants to intimidate a tavern keeper using his imposing presence and forceful words. The Game Master decides that intimidating the weak tavern keeper is an easy task, setting the DC at 8.

Dag has a **Neutral Charisma Trait**, which covers the Intimidate skill. This means he rolls a d20 once and uses the result.

Dag rolls a **10**, which is higher than the DC of **8**, so he succeeds. The Game Master narrates that the tavern keeper is visibly shaking, clearly intimidated by Dag, and reluctantly offers him the ale at a discounted price.

Ability Checks

Whenever a player's character attempts to perform an action related to one of their Skill Traits, they will roll a d20 for the Character Trait associated with that skill. The player needs to meet or exceed the Difficulty Class (DC) set by the Game Master to succeed.

Contested Rolls

In situations where players are in a **"Contested Roll,"** they will compete against another character or NPC.

This could involve **Grappling** with a creature (an opposed Strength contest) or trying to **Deceive** an NPC (an opposed Persuasion vs. Insight check).

In these cases, the player rolls the appropriate Character Trait, and the Game Master rolls for the NPC using the relevant trait. The higher roll determines the winner.

Saving Throws

If a character or non-player character/monster encounters a condition, such as blindness, the Game Master may require them to roll an appropriate "Saving Throw." The Game Master sets a Difficulty Class (DC), and if the character fails to meet or exceed this DC, they are affected by the condition. Depending on the condition, the Game Master may also require a player to make a Saving Throw on subsequent turns for the player to remove the condition.

Saving Throw Conditions

Conditions such as being ***Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Poisoned, Grappled, Stunned, Frightened, Deafened, etc.*** are good examples of what players would need to make a Saving Throw against.

These conditions in GATEWAY can affect characters in various ways, impacting their abilities and actions. Here are some basic rules for handling common conditions:

Blinded

- **Effect:** A blinded character cannot see, which means any attack rolls they make are at a disadvantage, and attack rolls against them are at an advantage.
- **Saving Throw:** Dexterity or Wisdom, as determined by the GM.
- **Duration:** Until the end of the character's next turn, or until they succeed on the saving throw, whichever comes first.

Charmed

- **Effect:** A charmed character cannot attack the charmer or target the charmer with harmful abilities or magical effects. The charmer has an advantage on any ability check to interact socially with the charmed character.
- **Saving Throw:** Wisdom.
- **Duration:** 1 minute, or until the character succeeds on the saving throw

Deafened
- **Effect:** A deafened character cannot hear, which means they automatically fail any ability check that requires hearing.
- **Saving Throw:** Constitution.
- **Duration:** Until the end of the character's next turn, or until they succeed on the saving throw, whichever comes first.

Falling Prone
- **Effect:** A prone character's only movement option is to crawl unless they stand up and thereby end the condition. The character has **disadvantage** on attack rolls. An attack roll against the character has **advantage** if the attacker is within 5 feet. Otherwise, the attack roll has **disadvantage**.
- **Saving Throw:** No saving throw is typically required to stand up from falling prone.
- **Duration:** it requires half the character's movement speed to stand.

Frightened
- **Effect:** A frightened character has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while the source of their fear is within line of sight. They cannot willingly move closer to the source of their fear.
- **Saving Throw:** Wisdom.
- **Duration:** 1 minute, or until the character succeeds on the saving throw, whichever comes first.

Grappled
- **Effect:** A grappled character's movement speed becomes 0, and they cannot benefit from any bonus to their speed.
- **Saving Throw to Escape:** Strength or Dexterity, contested by the grappler's Strength (Athletics) check.
- **Duration:** Until the grapple ends, either by the character succeeding on the saving throw, or the grappler releasing them willingly.

Paralyzed
- **Effect:** A paralyzed character is incapacitated and cannot move or speak. They automatically fail Strength and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against the character have advantage, and any attack that hits the character is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet.
- **Saving Throw:** Constitution.
- **Duration:** 1 minute, or until the character succeeds on the saving throw, whichever comes first.

Poisoned
- **Effect:** A poisoned character has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.
- **Saving Throw:** Constitution.
- **Duration**: 1 minute, or until the character succeeds on the saving throw, whichever comes first.

Restrained
- **Effect:** A restrained character's speed becomes 0, and they cannot benefit from any bonus to their speed. Attack rolls against the character have advantage, and the character's attack rolls have disadvantage. The character has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.
- **Saving Throw:** Strength or Dexterity, contested by the restraining effect.
- **Duration:** Until the restraint ends, either by the character succeeding on the saving throw, or the restraining effect being removed.

Stunned
- **Effect:** A stunned character is incapacitated, cannot move, and can speak only falteringly. The character automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against the character have advantage.
- **Saving Throw:** Constitution.
- **Duration:** Until the end of the character's next turn, or until they succeed on the saving throw, whichever comes first.

Unconscious
- **Effect:** An unconscious character is incapacitated, cannot move, or speak, and is unaware of their surroundings. The character drops whatever they are holding and falls prone. The character automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against the character have advantage, and any attack that hits the character is a critical hit if the attacker is within 5 feet.
- **Saving Throw:** None while the character remains unconscious.
- **Duration:** Until the character regains consciousness, typically by receiving healing, finishing a long rest, or being otherwise revived.

Advantage and Disadvantage Rules

Sometimes an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw is influenced by special circumstances known as **Advantage** and **Disadvantage**. Advantage reflects favorable conditions, while Disadvantage reflects unfavorable ones. When a player has either Advantage or Disadvantage, they roll a second d20 alongside their original roll.

- **Advantage:** Use the higher of the two rolls.

- **Disadvantage:** Use the lower of the two rolls.

Examples:
- With Disadvantage, if a player rolls a 17 and a 5, they use the 5.

- With Advantage, if a player rolls a 17 and a 5, they use the 17.

Proficiency Interactions

If a player has **Proficiency** (which grants them Advantage), and a situation imposes **Disadvantage** on their roll, the two cancel each other out, resulting in a **Neutral roll** (rolling 1d20).

Double Advantage or Disadvantage

Double Advantage or Disadvantage does not stack to allow more dice rolls. Instead, apply a simple modifier:

- **Double Advantage: Add +1 to the roll.**
- **Double Disadvantage: Subtract -1 from the roll.**

This ensures that even with compounded circumstances, the game remains streamlined and straightforward. The following guidelines can be followed:

Advantage and Disadvantage Guidelines

- **Proficiency (+) Trait with Advantage**
  - **Roll**: 2d20, take the highest number rolled, and add +1 to the total.
  - **Explanation**: This represents a skilled character with favorable circumstances.
- **Proficiency (+) Trait with Disadvantage**
  - **Roll:** 1d20, take the number rolled.
  - **Explanation:** The disadvantage cancels out the proficiency advantage, resulting in a normal roll.
- **Neutral (Blank) Trait with Advantage**
  - **Roll**: 2d20, take the highest number rolled.
  - **Explanation**: A neutral character with favorable circumstances.
- **Neutral (Blank) Trait with Disadvantage**
  - **Roll**: 2d20, take the lowest number rolled.
  - **Explanation**: A neutral character with unfavorable circumstances.
- **Deficiency (-) Trait with Advantage**
  - **Roll**: 1d20, take the number rolled.
  - **Explanation**: The advantage cancels out the deficiency disadvantage, resulting in a normal roll.
- **Deficiency (-) Trait with Disadvantage**
  - **Roll**: 2d20, take the lowest number rolled, and subtract -1 from the total.
  - **Explanation**: This represents an unskilled character with unfavorable circumstances, making success harder to achieve.

Critical "Successes" and "Fails"

When a player rolls a **natural 20** or a **natural 1** on a d20 without any modifiers, these are considered **Critical Successes (20)** and **Critical Fails (1)**, respectively.

Critical Success (Natural 20):

- **Effect:** Achieving the impossible, gaining a bonus, or Advantage on the next roll.
- **Game Master's Role:** The GM should take extra time to narrate the scenario, emphasizing the excitement and significance of success.

  This can result in extraordinary accomplishments, unexpected boons, or other positive outcomes.

Critical Fail (Natural 1)

- **Effect:** Failing even the simplest task, receiving a penalty, or Disadvantage on the next roll.
- **Game Master's Role:** The GM should describe the scenario in a way that adds tension and consequence. This could mean a spectacular failure, an unintended negative outcome, or other detrimental effects.

Note: These rules are meant to add drama and excitement to the game, making moments of extreme success or failure memorable. "Critical Hits" in combat will be detailed further on in the rules.

Initiative and Combat Rounds

Before engaging in combat, the Game Master establishes the order in which characters and non-player characters/monsters will act through an **Initiative Roll**.

- **Initiative Roll:** Each player rolls their **Dexterity Trait (Initiative Order Check)**, sorting the initiative order from highest to lowest. The GM repeats this process for NPCs or monsters.
- **Combat Rounds**: Combat proceeds in rounds, beginning with the participant with the **highest Initiative Number**. Each round provides opportunities for characters to act strategically.

Actions in Combat

During their turn in combat, each character can perform a series of actions:

- **Move Action**: Move up to a maximum distance, typically around 30 feet.
- **Primary Action**: Perform a single significant action, such as attacking, casting a spell, or interacting with objects.
- **Bonus Action**: Execute a quick action, typically granted by certain abilities, spells, or items.

Characters must carefully consider their actions to maximize their effectiveness in battle, contributing to the dynamic and strategic nature of combat encounters.

Primary Action Options

- **Attack**: Make an attack against an enemy.
- **Dash**: Move again up to the same distance as the first move action.
- **Interact with an object**: Manipulate or use an object in the environment.
- **Cast a Spell or use a Special Ability**: Perform a magical or special action as defined by the character's abilities.
- **Hide**: Attempt to conceal yourself from enemies.
- **Search**: Look for something specific in the environment.
- **Ready an Action**: Delay your action until a specified trigger occurs, then perform the chosen action.
- **Grapple**: Engage in a Strength Skill Contest to restrain an enemy.
- **Escape from being Grappled**: Use a Strength Skill Contest to break free from a grapple.
- **Declare a Dodge**: Impose a Deficiency or Negative modifier (GM's choice) on all attacks against you until your next turn.
- **Help on another player's turn**: Aid another player granting the target Proficiency or a Positive modifier on their next Primary Action.
- **Improvise**: Describe a unique action to the GM to see if it can be performed. Creativity is encouraged! *(*GM's see **"Rule of Cool" section)***

Bonus Action Options

- **Interact with an object**: Manipulate or use an object as a quick action.
- **Switch Weapons**: Change to a different weapon.
- **Talk to someone during combat**: Communicate with allies or enemies.
- **Special Abilities**: Use abilities that specify they can be performed as a bonus action, such as:
  - **Cast a Spell**: Use a spell that can be cast as a bonus action.
  - **Attack a second time**: Make an additional attack if the character has an ability that allows it.
  - **Use an Item**: Quickly use a potion or other item.
- **Any other Minor action**: Perform any minor action approved by the Game Master.

Combat Example

***Scenario**: Duke Starslayer, the space wizard, is facing two space marines who are about 30 feet away. Duke is proficient with his Dexterity Trait and wants to move and attack one of the space marines using his versatile Laser sword, which allows a Dexterity-based attack.*

***Duke's Turn**:*

1. ***Move Action**:*
    - *Duke uses his Move Action to close the 30 feet distance to engage with one of the space marines.*

2. ***Primary Action**:*
    - *Duke makes a Melee Attack with his Laser sword. Being proficient in Dexterity, he rolls the d20 twice and takes the higher result.*
    - *Duke rolls an 18 on the higher roll.*
    - *The GM checks the space marine's Armor Class and determines that Duke's attack hits.*
    - *The GM decides that the hit is fatal, and the space marine is killed.*

3. ***Bonus Action**:*
    - *Duke chooses not to use his Bonus Action and waits until the next turn.*

***GM Note**: Describing combat should be more dynamic and engaging than the basic mechanics outlined above. The GM should narrate actions vividly to enhance the storytelling experience. For example:*

***Narration Example**: "Duke Starslayer sprints across the battlefield, his eyes fixed on the two space marines who brace themselves for his assault. With a swift motion, he draws his Laser sword, its blade humming with energy. As he closes in, he slashes at the space marine on his left, the blade cutting through the air with precision. The Laser sword meets its mark, severing the trooper's head cleanly. Smoke rises from the cauterized wound as the body collapses in front of the stunned comrade. Duke stands ready, the glow of his weapon casting a fierce light on the remaining foe."*

Combat Damage

Each player's combat attack will only inflict **1 Point of Damage** on a successful hit. For balance, the Game Master will also have Non-Player Characters (NPC's) and Monsters will also follow the same damage values.

As gameplay progresses, the Game Master can introduce better weaponry or abilities that increase damage. Similarly, enemies can be given higher damage outputs to maintain a balanced challenge. *(See the **Add Modifiers in the "Advanced Characters' section in the previous Chapter**)*

Alternatively, if players and the GM want to have a more customization over **Damage Output** and **Hit Points,** they can refer to the **"Advanced Play Variants" section** further on.

Critical Hits

Rolling a **"Natural 20"** on the die during an Attack action will automatically deal a Critical Hit.

A Critical Hit results in dealing **Double Damage** to the target.

Critical Failure

Rolling a "**Natural 1"** on the die during an Attack action will automatically result in a **Critical Failure**,

A Critical Failure means the attack automatically misses the target. The Game Master can then impose additional penalties on the player's character such as:

- Dropping their weapon.
- Falling Prone
- Suffering a Disadvantage roll on their next attack.

Reaching "0" Hit Points

When a player's Hit Points (HP) drop to 0 or below, they enter a **Dying State**. In this state, the player must succeed on **three Death Saving Throws** to stabilize and return to **1 HP**.

- At the start of each turn while dying, the player must use all their actions to roll a d20. Rolling a **10 or higher** is a **success**; rolling **below 10** is a **failure**.
- Three successes allow the player to return to 1 HP on their next turn.
- Three failures result in the character's death.
- Rolling a **Natural 20** counts as **two Successes**, while rolling a **Natural 1** counts as **two Failures**.

If the player is **Hit** or **Loses HP** while in the Dying State, they automatically suffer **one Failure**. Another player can restore them to 1 HP or more instantly through healing methods such as magic, medicine, or potions.

***Instant Death Exception**: A Character dies instantly if a single source of damage reduces it to 0 hit points and the remaining damage equals or exceeds its hit point maximum.*

Recovering Hit Points

Players can recover HP through healing potions, healing magic, medical aid or naturally by taking rests.

- **Short Rest (1 hour in-game):** Each player automatically recovers half of their maximum HP (rounded down).
- **Long Rest (8 hours in-game):** Each player fully restores their HP.

Note: **Multiple Short Rests** do not grant additional HP recovery unless combat or damage (from traps/enemies) occurs between rests.

Using Miniatures (Optional)

While many Tabletop Roleplaying Games rely on the imaginative "Theater of the Mind" approach, some Game Masters (GMs) prefer using miniatures for combat or other scenarios. If miniatures are used, the following conversions can be applied:

- On a 1-inch square grid playmat or a hex board, each space represents 5 feet for determining size, movement, or range.
- The GM can adjust the scale of the squares/hexes according to the size or scope of the characters and combats.

Example: If characters are in giant robots and fighting other large robots or creatures, the GM might increase the distance represented by each square/hex to more than 5 feet to better reflect the scale of the scenario.

Size

Game Masters (GMs) and players can use the following guidelines to determine a character's size in feet and the corresponding size of a miniature on a grid or hex board:

Size	Feet	Squares	Hex
Tiny	2 feet and below	1 square	1 hex
Small	2-4 feet	1 square	1 hex
Medium	4-8 feet	1 square	1 hex
Large	8-16 feet	2x2 squares	3 hex
Huge	16-32 feet	3x3 squares	7 hex
Gargantuan	32-64 feet	4x4 squares	12 hex
Colossal	64 feet and above	5x5 squares	19 hex

Movement Speed

In GATEWAY, the standard base movement speed for any **medium-sized character** is **30 feet per turn**. Game Masters (GMs) can adjust the movement speed for characters and NPCs based on their size or other factors. Below are the average movement speeds for different sizes:

Size	Feet
Tiny	20 ft
Small	25 ft
Medium	30 ft
Large	40 ft
Huge	50 ft
Gargantuan	60 ft
Colossal	70 ft

Attack Range

Using the 5-foot per square/hex standard, GMs and players can calculate the range for attacks as follows:

Range	Square/Hex/Feet
Melee	1 square/hex (within 5 feet)
Short	2-6 squares/hexes (10-30 feet)
Medium	7-12 squares/hexes (35-60 feet)
Long	13-24 squares/hexes (65-120 feet)
Extended	25+ squares/hexes (125+ feet)

If you are not using miniatures, simplify the game mechanics by narrating the type of range a player character or NPC is in:

Range	Narrated As
Melee	Within arm's reach, close combat
Short	Nearby, easily within a few steps
Medium	Moderate distance, requiring some movement to reach
Long	Far away, typically requiring significant movement to close the distance
Extended	Very far, often at the edge of visibility or beyond

These guidelines help standardize movement and attack ranges, making it easier to manage combat and other actions within the game.

Basic Vehicle Rules

In GATEWAY, vehicles can add an exciting layer to your adventures, whether you are racing through city streets, navigating treacherous terrain, or engaging in high-speed chases. Here are some basic rules to help you incorporate vehicles into your game.

Vehicle Stats

Each vehicle has a set of stats like characters. The primary stats for vehicles include:

- **Speed:** The maximum distance a vehicle can travel per turn.
- **Handling:** Modifies the driver's skill checks for difficult maneuvers.
- **Armor Class (AC):** How hard it is to hit the vehicle.
- **Hit Points (HP):** The amount of damage the vehicle can take before becoming inoperable.
- **Weapons/Damage:** If the vehicle is equipped with a weapon and the damage output it can deal.

Example Vehicle Stats

- **Horse-Drawn Carriage**
  Speed: 40 ft
  Handling: +0
  AC: 12
  HP: 4
- **Motorcycle**
  Speed: 80 ft
  Handling: +2
  AC: 14
  HP: 3
- **Car**
  Speed: 60 ft
  Handling: +1
  AC: 15
  HP: 5
- **Tank**
  Speed: 30 ft
  Handling: -1
  AC: 18
  HP: 8
  Weapon: Cannon
  Damage: 3 per hit

Operating Vehicles

Driving Check: When performing a difficult maneuver or when driving in hazardous conditions, the driver must make a Driving Check. This is typically a Dexterity check modified by the vehicle's Handling stat.

- **Speed and Movement**: Vehicles have a set Speed stat, representing the maximum distance they can move in a turn. This can be adjusted for narrative purposes or specific conditions.

- **Attacks and Combat**: Vehicles can be targeted in combat. Attacks against vehicles use the vehicle's AC, and damage is subtracted from the vehicle's HP.

Chase Rules

During a **chase**, use the following rules to determine the outcome:

1. **Chase Sequence**: The chase is divided into turns, where each driver rolls for initiative.

2. **Pursuit**: The pursuing vehicle must maintain or reduce the distance to catch the target. The GM sets the starting distance and any obstacles.

3. **Obstacle Check**: Each turn, drivers must make a Driving Check to navigate obstacles. Failure results in reduced speed or other penalties.

4. **Escape**: The pursued vehicle can attempt to escape if it increases the distance beyond a certain threshold (set by the GM).

Damage and Repairs

- **Damage**: When a vehicle's HP reaches 0, it becomes inoperable. The driver and passengers may need to make Dexterity saving throws to avoid injury, determined by the GM.

- **Repairs**: Repairing a vehicle requires a certain amount of in-game time and resources. A character proficient in a relevant skill (such as Mechanics or Engineering) can attempt repairs.

Example Scenario

High-Speed Chase: The players are in a car fleeing from enemy motorcycles.

1. **Initiative**: Both the players and the pursuers roll for initiative.

2. **Movement**: On their turn, each vehicle moves up to its Speed.

3. **Driving Check**: The GM describes a sharp turn ahead. Both drivers must make a Driving Check (Dexterity + Handling). Failure means the vehicle loses speed or control.

4. **Combat**: The players can attempt to shoot at the pursuers, targeting the motorcycle's AC. Successful hits reduce the motorcycle's HP.

5. **Escape**: If the players manage to increase the distance sufficiently and avoid obstacles, they can escape the chase.

By using these basic vehicle rules, you can add thrilling vehicular action to your GATEWAY adventures, enhancing the dynamic and immersive experience for your players.

Chapter 4 - Game Master Tips and Guidelines

If you are a **Veteran Game Master**, you might not need these tips, but if you have never run a Tabletop RPG before, read on as this may help you run *GATEWAY* and many other roleplaying games.

Know the Rules

Understanding the rules of the GATEWAY is crucial for Game Masters as well as the players. While creativity and improvisation are essential elements that bring the game to life, a solid grasp of the rules ensures that gameplay remains consistent and fair for everyone involved. Familiarity with the rules allows for smoother gameplay, reduces the likelihood of disputes, and helps maintain a balanced environment where all players can enjoy the game. It also empowers players to make informed decisions and create strategies that are in line with the game's mechanics.

Moreover, a GM well-versed in the rules can more effectively guide the narrative and manage unexpected situations, blending structure with spontaneity to enhance the overall experience. Therefore, taking the time to learn and understand the rules is an investment in the quality and enjoyment of the game.

Flexible Rule Interpretation

The rules of this game provide basic instructions on how to play using this system, but as the Game Master (GM), you are not limited to them. Treat **ANY** rule in this system as a **Guideline** rather than a strict directive.

Feel free to **add new rules** whenever it enhances the gameplay. Be flexible with your players and adjust or change rules as needed to ensure the story makes sense and to create the most enjoyable and engaging situations and outcomes for the group.

Your primary goal is to foster a fun and immersive experience for everyone involved, so do not hesitate to modify the rules to best serve the narrative and the group's enjoyment.

Helping Players Create Characters

As emphasized in the **"Character Creation" section**, the Game Master should assist each player in developing an exciting character by asking prepared questions to help them determine the type of character they want to play.

If players find this task overwhelming, provide them with guidance and support. If they cannot precisely define their character at first or choose something that does not perfectly fit into the game, encourage them to describe their character concept, select some Proficiencies and Deficiencies, and then you can fill in any special abilities or additional proficiencies as the game progresses.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to play—focus on fostering creativity and ensuring that each player feels engaged and enthusiastic about their character.

World Building

Because this game can be played in any genre, there is no right or wrong way to build your world. If you are running a completely random setting, such as a space-themed game, feel free to draw from existing tropes or get creative and invent your own concepts. If you are running a theme based on an established roleplaying game, consider using other source materials and ideas that fit within that universe.

For a more collaborative approach, ask your players what theme they would like to play before you start. They might even provide you with some setting ideas that can inspire the world you build.

- **Incorporate Player Ideas**: Invite players to contribute to the setting and lore of the game world. This can range from creating a hometown for their character to suggesting political factions or mythical creatures. When players see their ideas come to life, they feel a greater connection to the game.

- **Session Zero (Optional)**: Use a preliminary session to discuss the world, themes, and potential plotlines with your players. This collaborative effort helps align everyone's expectations and encourages investment from the start.

Adventure Building

When planning each adventure, focus on creating elements that will maximize fun for both you and your players. It is essential to understand what type of game your players are looking for. Are they heroes eager to explore and fight? Do they prefer diplomacy and solving mysteries? Or are they looking for a high-paced adventure that combines various elements?

Communicate with your players to gauge their preferences. If they are unsure, use a simple formula to ensure a well-rounded game:

1. **Somewhere to Explore**: Provide a location like a town, dungeon, or spaceport.

2. **Someone to Interact With**: Include NPCs such as a barkeep, star pilot, or villain.

3. **Something to Fight or Accomplish**: Introduce challenges like dragons, evil robots, or an evil mastermind, or goals such as finishing a race, solving a mystery, or returning an object.

By including these elements, you can create engaging and diverse adventures that cater to your players' interests and enhance the overall gaming experience.

Creating Non-Player Characters and Monsters

Creating **non-player characters (NPCs)** and monsters follows a similar approach to character creation for players. You can choose to fully stat them out with various stats, abilities, and equipment, or you can simplify the process by focusing on key traits such as **Proficiencies**, **Deficiencies**, **Armor Class (AC), Attacks, Damage Output,** and **Hit Points (HP)**.

Do not feel pressured to make it overly complicated, just use what works best for you and your game. Your players do not always need to know the behind-the-scenes details of a creature's stats or abilities. Just be prepared to jot down key details, especially if combat arises, to ensure consistency during gameplay.

Example Monster: Goblin
AC: 10
HP: 1
Proficiency: None
Deficiency: INT, CHA
Weapons: Rusty Pike (Melee)

Example NPC:
Carlow McGillicuty
Human Blacksmith
AC: 12
HP: 2
Proficiency: STR
Deficiency: WIS
Weapons: Hammer (Melee)

Creating Balanced Combat Scenarios

Creating balanced combat scenarios is crucial for providing an engaging and enjoyable experience for your players. Here is a closer look at why balancing encounters is essential and how Game Masters can achieve it effectively:

- **Player Satisfaction**: Balancing encounters ensures that players feel appropriately challenged without becoming frustrated or bored. It allows them to experience a sense of accomplishment when they overcome obstacles.

- **Immersion**: Well-balanced encounters enhance immersion by maintaining a sense of realism within the game world. Players are more likely to buy into the narrative and remain engaged when encounters feel credible and fair.

- **Group Dynamics**: Balanced encounters consider the abilities and preferences of the entire group, promoting teamwork and cooperation. They provide opportunities for each player to contribute meaningfully to the group's success.

Tailoring Encounters

- **Know Your Group**: Understand the capabilities and preferences of your players. Consider factors such as their character traits or abilities and preferred play style when designing encounters.

- **Adjust Difficulty**: Tailor encounters to match the skill level and preferences of your group. For novice players, start with simpler encounters and gradually increase the challenge as they gain experience. For experienced players, introduce more complex and strategic encounters to keep them engaged.

- **Dynamic Scaling**: Be prepared to adjust encounter difficulty on the fly based on how the battle unfolds. If the encounter proves too easy or difficult, consider modifying enemy tactics, adjusting enemy numbers, or introducing reinforcements to maintain the appropriate level of challenge.

- **Variety of Challenges**: Include a mix of combat encounters that offer different types of challenges. Some encounters may focus on strategic combat, while others may involve social interaction, exploration, or puzzle-solving. This variety keeps gameplay fresh and caters to different player preferences.

By prioritizing balance in combat scenarios, Game Masters can create engaging and rewarding experiences that cater to the abilities and preferences of their group. Striking the right balance ensures that players remain invested, challenged, and eager to continue their adventures.

Non-Combat Scenarios

During exploration or non-combat interactions, ensure all players have an opportunity to participate and contribute. Some players may try to take on multiple tasks or speak for the group, so it is essential to break down these moments and give each player a chance to shine. You may use some of these as guidelines:

- **Player Engagement:** Ask each player what their character is doing or how they are interacting with the environment, NPCs, or objects.
- **Turn-Based Approach:** Rotate around the table, giving each player a turn to describe their character's actions or intentions.
- **Individual Focus:** Encourage players to focus on their character's perspectives and goals, fostering deeper immersion and character development.
- **Dynamic Responses:** React to players' actions and choices, providing meaningful consequences and shaping the narrative based on their decisions.

By facilitating equal participation and engagement during non-combat scenarios, you create a more inclusive and immersive gaming experience where each player feels valued and involved in shaping the story.

Encouraging Player Involvement in Storytelling

A key aspect of creating an immersive and enjoyable tabletop roleplaying experience is ensuring strong player engagement. As a Game Master (GM), one of the most effective ways to achieve this is by involving players in the storytelling process. Here are several strategies to foster player engagement:

Meaningful Decisions

- **Impactful Choices**: Design scenarios where player decisions have significant consequences. Whether it is choosing to save a village or pursuing a dangerous foe, ensure their choices affect the game world and narrative direction.
- **Moral Dilemmas**: Present players with complex moral choices that challenge their characters' beliefs and values. These moments can lead to rich storytelling and character development.

Character-Driven Plotlines

- **Personal Quests**: Integrate personal story arcs for each character. These could involve past relationships, personal goals, or unresolved conflicts. By weaving these personal elements into the main plot, players become more emotionally invested.
- **Character Backgrounds**: Encourage players to create detailed backgrounds for their characters. Use these backgrounds to inspire subplots and side quests that tie back to the main story.

Interactive NPCs and Environments

- **Dynamic NPCs**: Populate your world with well-developed non-player characters (NPCs) who have their own agendas and personalities. Allow players to build relationships with these NPCs, making the world feel alive and responsive.
- **Reactive World**: Design the game world to react to the players' actions. If they save a town from bandits, let them see the town prosper. If they make enemies, show how these adversaries adapt and respond.

Player-Led Scenes

- **Shared Narrative Control**: Occasionally, give players the reins to narrate scenes or describe the outcomes of their actions. This can be especially effective during character interactions or when describing the results of successful skill checks.

- **Flashbacks and Dreams**: Allow players to narrate flashbacks or dream sequences that reveal more about their characters' histories and motivations.

In-Game Rewards and Recognition

- **Tangible Rewards**: Provide in-game rewards that reflect the players' contributions to the story. This could be in the form of unique items, titles, or narrative advantages.

- **Recognition and Influence**: Show how the players' actions earn them recognition and influence within the game world. This can manifest as new allies, increased reputation, or the ability to sway political decisions.

By encouraging players to contribute to the narrative and making their decisions impactful, you create a more engaging and collaborative storytelling experience. This not only enhances player investment but also leads to richer and more dynamic gameplay, ensuring that everyone at the table feels valued and involved in the unfolding adventure.

The "Rule of Cool"

A great GM should embrace the **"Rule of Cool"**, allowing players to produce creative and unconventional ideas for their characters.

Encouraging this kind of innovation not only makes the game more engaging but also empowers players to think outside the box. When a player presents a clever idea, the GM should reward their creativity by at least letting them attempt a roll to see if they succeed, even if the difficulty class (DC) is set to an almost impossible level.

This approach fosters a dynamic and unpredictable game environment, helping the GM develop improvisational skills as they "roll" with unexpected situations.

Above all, the priority is to ensure that everyone at the table is having the most fun possible. By embracing creative attempts, the GM and players can create memorable moments and a more enjoyable gaming experience.

Avoid Metagaming

Encouraging players to stay true to their characters' knowledge and perspectives is essential for maintaining immersion and integrity in the game. **Metagaming** occurs when players use **out-of-character knowledge** to influence their characters' actions, which can undermine the narrative and fairness of the game.

For instance, a character in your world who has never heard of werewolves shouldn't know that they are allergic to silver, even if the player does. If a player attempts to exploit this out-of-character knowledge, it should be gently discouraged. Instead, guide players to base their decisions on their characters' experiences and knowledge.

This approach ensures that actions and reactions are authentic, preserving the roleplaying aspect of the game.

By focusing on in-character knowledge and motivations, you create a richer, more immersive story where each player's contributions are grounded in their character's reality.

Handling Conflict

Conflicts or disagreements are a natural part of any group activity, including tabletop roleplaying games. To manage them effectively, it is crucial to promote open communication within your group. Encourage players to express their concerns or disagreements respectfully and ensure that everyone listens to each other.

As a Game Master (GM), practice active listening and acknowledge each player's perspective to show understanding. Address issues promptly to prevent minor problems from escalating into major conflicts. Step in as a neutral mediator to facilitate discussions and help players find common ground or compromise.

Establishing clear ground rules at the start of your campaign can also prevent misunderstandings and ensure everyone understands the importance of respect and inclusivity. Flexibility and compromise are key; encourage players to be willing to find middle ground where everyone is reasonably satisfied.

Sometimes, as a GM, you might need to make a final decision. When you do, ensure it is fair, transparent, and in the group's best interest.

Encouraging Roleplaying

Roleplaying is at the heart of tabletop RPGs, and fostering it can lead to a richer, more immersive experience for everyone involved. Creating a supportive environment where players feel comfortable stepping into their characters' roles without fear of judgment is essential.

As a GM, you can lead by example by embodying your NPCs with distinct personalities and behaviors, setting a standard for your players. Rewarding creativity with in-game advantages, experience points, or narrative bonuses can encourage players to immerse themselves in their characters.

Allowing players' roleplaying choices to meaningfully impact the story increases their investment and engagement. Encourage players to develop detailed backgrounds and motivations for their characters, providing more material for roleplaying.

Incorporating personal character arcs into the main storyline can also enhance roleplaying potential by offering personal stakes and growth opportunities.

Creating scenarios that require interaction among players and NPCs can foster dialogue and relationship-building. Using roleplaying prompts or questions can further encourage players to think and act in character, deepening their immersion in the game world.

Feedback and Improvement

Continual improvement ensures a better experience for both the GM and the players. Scheduling regular feedback sessions, either after each session or at key campaign milestones, allows for open discussion on what is working and what is not.

Anonymous surveys can provide more honest feedback if some players are reluctant to speak up directly. Encourage players to provide constructive criticism, focusing on specific areas for improvement rather than general complaints. Ask for actionable suggestions to understand what players would like to see different or improved.

Stay informed by reading articles, watching videos, and participating in forums to learn new techniques and ideas for game mastering. Be willing to experiment with new approaches and adapt based on what works best for your group.

After each session, take time to reflect on what went well and what could be improved. Self-awareness is key to growth and paying attention to your pacing and overall game management helps maintain a balance between storytelling, combat, and player agency.

By focusing on these areas, you can create a more enjoyable and effective gaming experience, fostering a collaborative, immersive, and dynamic roleplaying environment.

Rewarding players with the "Basic Level Up System (Optional)"

After a gaming session, the Game Master (GM) typically grants experience points (XP) to players based on their accomplishments and contributions during the session.

The GM may evaluate various factors such as completing quests, defeating monsters, overcoming challenges, roleplaying interactions, and demonstrating strategic thinking.

Experience points are awarded to reflect the characters' growth and development throughout the adventure. *(See the **"Character Creation" section** for more information on **Leveling Up** characters.)*

Chapter 5 - Advanced Play Variants

In the Basic Rules of ***GATEWAY***, certain character builds might feel redundant due to the blanket application of "Proficiencies" and "Deficiencies" across entire Character Traits. Players may find themselves frequently rolling two twenty-sided dice and taking the highest (**Proficiency**) or lowest (**Deficiency**), which can lead to a sense of being overpowered or underpowered.

To address this, the **Advanced Play Variants** have been introduced to enhance **character customization**, **balance**, and **alignment** with standard d20 Tabletop RPG mechanics. Instead of applying Proficiencies and Deficiencies to entire Character Traits, these variants assign them to specific "**Skills**." For instance, a character could be Proficient in Acrobatics under the Dexterity Trait but Neutral or Deficient in other Dexterity-related skills like Stealth or Dexterity Saving Throws.

This approach allows for more nuanced and personalized character builds. By breaking down Character Traits into individual skills and assigning a certain number of points for players to distribute among their **Skills**, **Attack Proficiencies**, and **Saving Throws**, each character will feel **More Unique**. This method maintains the simplicity and universal theme of character creation that GATEWAY is known for, while adding depth and flexibility.

Advanced Character Sheet

For this Advanced Variant, players are allocated **Character Creation Points** to distribute across their skills, or the Game Master can assist in creating characters tailored to match the desired archetype. This system fosters a more customized and balanced gameplay experience, ensuring that characters feel distinct and true to the player's vision.

Character Creation Point Allocations

- **Saving Throws:** Allocate 2 Proficiency Points and 1 Deficiency Point for Saving Throws.
- **Attack Skills:** Use 1 Proficiency Point to specialize in an Attack Skill (choose from Melee, Ranged, or Magic).
- **Other Skills:** Distribute 5 Proficiency Points and 3 Deficiency Points among other skills.

Point Allocation Guidelines

Non-Stacking Rule: Proficiency and Deficiency Points cannot stack on the same skill. A skill can only be Proficient, Deficient, or Neutral.

Exception for Neutral Traits: A Proficiency Point can be used to negate a Deficiency, turning a Deficient skill into a Neutral skill. This means players can choose to use their Proficiency Points to eliminate any Deficiencies, balancing their character's traits.

Alternative Hit Points

Game Masters have the option to use the **Standard HP Rules** or adopt the following advanced rules based on a character's **Constitution Saving Throw (HP) Trait**. This approach offers a more tailored hit point system that reflects the character's overall health and resilience.

Hit Points Calculation (Hit Die)

- **Deficiency Trait**: Characters with a Deficiency in their Constitution trait calculate their HP using the formula **1d6 + 6 per level**.
- **Neutral Trait**: Characters with a Neutral Constitution trait calculate their HP using the formula **1d8 + 8 per level**.
- **Proficiency Trait**: Characters with a Proficiency in their Constitution trait calculate their HP using the formula **1d10 + 10 per level**.

Advanced Damage Values

When using **Alternative Hit Points rules**, the GM should also then use the **Advanced Damage Values** for weapons and all encountered enemies.

The following advanced chart below can be used to guide specific **Weapon Damage** options.

Weapons	Damage Die	Weapon Examples
Light	1d4	Wooden Club, Dagger, Throwing Knife, Taser, Blow Dart, Light Hammer, Sickle, Sling, Whip, Snub Pistol
Medium	1d6	Hand Axe, Short Sword, Short Bow, Hand Crossbow, Javelin, Quarterstaff, Spear, Scimitar, Trident, Pistol (ex. 9mm), Regular Revolver, Hunting Rifle, Musket Small Laser Pistol, Grenade, Naginata, Small Laser sword
Heavy	1d8	Great Club, Light Crossbow, Battle-axe, Flail, Longsword, Morningstar, Rapier, War-Pick, Warhammer, Longbow, Large Pistol (ex. Desert Eagle), Large Revolver (ex. Colt 45), Assault Rifle, Shotgun, Uzi, Submachine Gun, Katana, Laser sword, Large Laser Blaster
Great Weapons	1d10	Glaive, Claymore, Great Sword, Halberd, Maul, Pike, Heavy Crossbow, Great Axe, Sniper Rifle, Heavy Machine Gun, Elephant Gun, Tommy Gun, Two Handed Katana, Double-bladed Laser sword
Ultra-Weapons	1d12	Lance, Tank-Killer Sniper Rifle, RPG, Bazooka, Missile Launcher, Railgun, BFG, Gatling Gun

Advanced Character Example:

A Player wants to play as a typical **Rogue/Thief** named ***Titus Stormbringer***. Using the Advanced Character Creation Variants, the player created the following character with the following Proficiencies and Deficiencies:

Proficiency:

- **Saves (2):** Dexterity Saving Throws, Charisma Saving Throws
- **Attack Skill (1):** Ranged Weapon Attacks
- **Other Skills (5):** Acrobatics, Lock Picking, Deception, Stealth, Sleight of Hand

Deficiency:

- **Saves (1):** Intelligence Saving Throws
- **Other Skills (3):** History, Nature, Medicine

Strength (STR):

- Athletics Check
- Melee Attack
- Strength Saving Throw

Dexterity (DEX):

- Turn Order in Battle (Initiative Check)
- Acrobatics Check **"+" Proficient**
- Sleight of Hand Check **"+" Proficient**
- Piloting
- **Lock Picking "+" Proficient**
- **Stealth Check "+" Proficient**
- Hide Check
- **Ranged Attack "+" Proficient**
- **Dexterity Saving Throw (AC) "+" Proficient**
  AC = 14

Constitution (CON):

- Constitution Saving Throw (HP)
  HP = 1d8 + 8 (Neutral Blank Trait)

Intelligence (INT):

- Arcana Check
- **History Check "-" Deficient**
- Streetwise
- Investigation Check
- Tech Check
- **Nature Check "-" Deficient**
- Religion Check
- **Intelligence Saving Throw "-" Deficient**

Wisdom (WIS):

- Animal Handling Check
- Insight Check
- **Medicine Check "-" Deficient**
- Perception Check
- Survival Check
- Wisdom Saving Throw

Charisma (CHA):

- Deception Check **"+" Proficient**
- Intimidation Check
- Performance Check
- Persuasion Check
- **Charisma Saving Throw "+" Proficient**

Ranged Attack Weapon (DEX)

- **Light Crossbow – Medium Weapon (Proficient Above)**
  - **Range = Medium**
  - **Damage = 1d8**

***Note:** Any other dice rolls outside of these Skills and Saving Throws will just be a **Neutral d20 roll** and take the number rolled as the result.

***Also Note: Armor Class** and **Hit Points** are still based on what players have allocated in their **Dexterity (AC)** and **Constitution Saving Throw (HP)**

Example Scenarios:

Titus is presented with a door to try and unlock:

- This is a Lock Picking Check; therefore, they roll **2d20** and take the highest result rolled due to having Proficiency.

Titus tries to attack an orc using a Longsword:

- This is a Strength Melee attack; therefore, they only roll **1d20** and take the result rolled as they do not have Proficiency nor Deficiency.

Titus tries to recall some history about a town:

- This is a History Check; therefore, they roll **2d20** and take the lowest result rolled due to having Deficiency.

Titus is being Charmed by an enchantress:

- This is a Charisma Saving Throw; therefore, they roll **2d20** and take the highest result rolled due to having Proficiency.

Advanced Variant Level System (Optional)

In this optional leveling system, players advance from level 1 to level 20 by gaining experience points (XP) through various in-game activities such as combat, completing quests, and roleplaying, or by simply playing a set number of sessions.

Each level up provides specific rewards, including increases to hit points (HP), skill modifiers, attack bonuses, and the acquisition of new abilities and spells.

Experience Points (XP) or Session Milestones

Level	Total XP Required	Sessions Played
1	0	0
2	200	2
3	600	4
4	1,400	6
5	3,000	8
6	6,000	10
7	10,000	12
8	15,000	14
9	21,000	16
10	28,000	18
11	36,000	20
12	45,000	22
13	55,000	24
14	66,000	26
15	78,000	28
16	91,000	30
17	105,000	32
18	120,000	34
19	136,000	36
20	153,000	38

Advanced Rules Level Up Rewards

Level	Rewards
1	• Choose Archetype & Traits • HP Based on Constitution • Pick starting Special Abilities or Spells
2	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 1 Hit Die + X to add to HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
3	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 1 Hit Die + X • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
4	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 1 Hit Die + X to add to HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
5	• +1 to All Proficient Rolls • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn a Powerful Special Ability or Spell
6	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
7	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
8	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
9	• Additional +1 to All Proficient Rolls • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn a Powerful Special Ability or Spell
10	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
11	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
12	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 2 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1

13	• Additional +1 to All Proficient Rolls • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn a Powerful Special Ability or Spell
14	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
15	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
16	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
17	• Additional +1 to All Proficient Rolls • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn a Very Powerful Special Ability or Spell
18	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Improve Attack Bonus by +1
19	• +1 to one Skill Modifier • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Learn one new Special Ability or Spell
20	• +1 to one Skill or Saving Throw • Roll 3 Hit Dice + X to add to HP • Mastery: Learn a signature ability or spell that defines your character's ultimate power.

Advanced Level Up System - Special Notes

Hit Dice: The special dice used to decide how many Hit Points you gain when you level up. The specific die you roll depends on your Constitution Saving Throw status.

- **Deficiency (-),** you roll a six-sided die (d6) and add 6.
- **Neutral,** you roll an eight-sided die (d8) and add 8.
- **Proficiency (+),** you roll a ten-sided die (d10) and add 10.

- **Abilities and Spells**: Abilities and spells learned at higher levels should scale in power, becoming more impactful and reflecting the character's growth.

- **Customization**: Game Masters can customize rewards to better fit the narrative and the specific class or role of the character.
- **Flexibility**: Players and GMs are encouraged to tailor these guidelines to best fit their campaign and storytelling needs.

This optional level-up system ensures that characters steadily progress in power and capability, offering new and exciting abilities while enhancing their existing skills and attribute.

Conclusion: That is it! Now enjoy taking your players on an adventure with the **Printable Character Sheets** on the next few pages or download the **Form Fillable sheets** online at **Gateway RPG's WordPress site**.

May this be you and your players' **"*GATEWAY*"** into the fun and exciting hobby of tabletop roleplaying.

GATEWAY RPG - Standard Character Sheet

Character Name: _____

Character Race/Archetype/Class Description:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Proficiency: Mark "+" sign next to at least 1 trait
Deficiency: Mark "-" sign next to at least 1 trait
Cross out any Skills that do not belong in the setting

____ **Strength (STR)**
- Athletics Check
- Melee Attack
- Strength Saving Throws

____ **Dexterity (DEX)**
- Turn Order in Battle (Initiative Check)
- Acrobatics Check
- Sleight of Hand Check
- Piloting (Land, Sea, Air, Mech)
- Lock Picking
- Stealth Check
- Hide Check
- Ranged Attack
- Dexterity Saving Throws (AC)

____ **Constitution (CON)**
- Constitution Saving Throws (HP)

____ **Intelligence (INT)**
- Arcana Check
- History Check
- Streetwise
- Investigation Check
- Tech/Computer Use
- Nature Check
- Religion Check
- Intelligence Saving Throws

____ **Wisdom (WIS)**
- Animal Handling Check
- Insight Check
- Medicine Check
- Perception Check
- Survival Check
- Magic Spell Attack
- Casting Magic Spells (Non-Attack)
- Wisdom Saving Throws

____ **Charisma (CHA)**
- Deception Check
- Intimidation Check
- Performance Check
- Persuasion Check
- Charisma Saving Throws

Character Portrait

Armor Class (AC): _____ ***(Based on DEX Stat)***
Proficiency = 14, Neutral = 12, Deficiency = 10

Hit Points (HP): _____ ***(Based on CON Stat)***
Proficiency = 5, Neutral = 4, Deficiency = 3

Movement Speed: _____ ***(Standard Character is 30 ft)***

Melee Attack Weapons: (STR)
_____
_____
_____

Ranged Attack Weapons: (DEX)
_____
_____
_____

Special Abilities:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Items:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Background
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

GATEWAY RPG - Advanced Character Sheet

Character Name: _____

Character Race/Archetype/Class Description:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Proficiency: Mark "+" sign next to traits below
Deficiency: Mark "-" sign next to traits below
Mark any that are not setting appropriate with an "NA"

Saving Throw ***(Choose 2 Proficiency "+" and 1 Deficiency "- ")***

- ____ Strength Saving Throw
- ____ Dexterity Saving Throw (AC)
- ____ Constitution Saving Throw (HP)
- ____ Intelligence Saving Throw
- ____ Wisdom Saving Throw
- ____ Charisma Saving Throw

Attack Type ***(Choose 1 Proficiency "+")***

- ____ Melee Attack
- ____ Ranged Attack
- ____ Magic Spell Attack

Skill Traits ***(Choose 5 Proficiency "+" and 3 Deficiency "- ")***

Strength (STR):

- ____ Athletics Check

Dexterity (DEX):

- ____ Turn Order in Battle (Initiative Check)
- ____ Acrobatics Check
- ____ Sleight of Hand Check
- ____ Piloting (Land, Sea, Air, Mech)
- ____ Lock Picking
- ____ Stealth Check
- ____ Hide Check

Constitution (CON):

- _NA_ See Saving Throws

Intelligence (INT):

- ____ Arcana Check
- ____ History Check
- ____ Streetwise
- ____ Investigation Check
- ____ Tech/Computer Use
- ____ Nature Check
- ____ Religion Check

Wisdom (WIS):

- ____ Animal Handling Check
- ____ Insight Check
- ____ Medicine Check
- ____ Perception Check
- ____ Survival Check
- ____ Casting Magic Spells (Non-Attack)

Charisma (CHA):

- ____ Deception Check
- ____ Intimidation Check
- ____ Performance Check
- ____ Persuasion Check

Character Portrait

Armor Class (AC): _____ ***(Based on DEX Saving Throw Stat)***
Proficiency = 14, Neutral = 12, Deficiency = 10

Hit Points (HP): _____ ***(Based on CON Saving Throw Stat)***
Proficiency = 5, Neutral = 4, Deficiency = 3

Movement Speed: _____ ***(Standard Character is 30 ft)***

Melee Attack Weapons:

_____
_____
_____

Ranged Attack Weapons:

_____
_____
_____

Special Abilities:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Items:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Background:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

GATEWAY RPG

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Proficiency and Deficiency Guidelines:

- **"+" Proficiency** =Roll a d20 twice and take the higher roll
- **"-" Deficiency** = Roll a d20 twice and take the lower roll
- **__ Neutral (Blank Trait)** = A character that has neither proficiency nor deficiency will only roll a d20 once

Advantage and Disadvantage Guidelines:

Proficiency Trait with Advantage
Advantage (+1) = 2d20 and take the highest number rolled and add +1 to the total

Proficiency Trait with Disadvantage
No Bonus = 1d20 and take the number rolled

Neutral Trait with Advantage
Advantage = 2d20 and take the highest number rolled

Neutral Trait with Disadvantage
Disadvantage = 2d20 and take the lowest number rolled

Deficiency Trait with Advantage
No Bonus = 1d20 and take the number rolled

Deficiency Trait with Disadvantage
Disadvantage (-1) = 1d20 and take the lowest number rolled and subtract -1 from the total

Difficulty Class Scale

- **Simple:** 2 to 5
- **Easy:** 6 to 10
- **Moderate:** 11 to 15
- **Hard:** 16 to 19
- **Near Impossible:** 20

Attack Types

Melee Weapon Attacks = Strength Trait
Swords, Daggers, Axes, Katana, Clubs, Laser swords, etc.

Ranged Weapon Attacks = Dexterity Trait
Crossbows, Longbows, Short Bows, Muskets, Pistols, Lasers, Rifles, etc.

Magic Attacks = Wisdom Trait
Fireballs, Lightning, Charm, Force Push, etc.

Special Ability Attacks = GM Discretion
Depends what the GM chooses at character creation that your Ability trait uses.

Armor Class

Based on Dexterity Trait

- **"+" Proficiency = 14 AC**
- **"-" Deficiency = 10 AC**
- **Neutral (Blank Trait) = 12 AC**

Attack Range

- **Melee Range:** 1 square/hex (within 5 feet)
- **Short Range:** 2-6 squares/hexes (10-30 feet)
- **Medium Range:** 7-12 squares/hexes (35-60 feet)
- **Long Range:** 13-24 squares/hexes (65-120 feet)
- **Extended Range:** 25+ squares/hexes (125+ feet)

Resolving Combat

Step 1: Game Master Determines if there is a Surprise Round

Step 2: Roll Initiative for all involved (**Dexterity**)

Step 3: Resolve Surprise Round, if necessary, then full Initiative during each Round.

Step 4: During a Player's Turn they can do the following:

- **One Move Action** (30 feet on average)
- **One Primary Action**
- **One Bonus Action**

Primary Action examples:

- **Attack**
- Move again "aka **Dash**" (move the same amount of the first movement)
- **Interact** with an object
- **Cast** a spell or use some other **Special Ability**
- **Hide**
- **Search**
- **Ready an Action** (Choose to delay your action and set a trigger and what you want to do when the trigger is met)
- **Grapple** (Contested Strength Skill)
- **Escape** from being Grappled (Contested Strength Skill)
- Declare a **Dodge** (causes Deficiency, of all attacks to this player until its next turn.)
- **Help** on another player's turn (Gives the target player Proficiency, on their next Primary Action)
- **Improvise-** simply tell your GM what you would like to do as an action to see if they can allow it (Get creative!) ***GM's see "Rule of Cool".**

Bonus Action examples:

- **Interact** with an object
- **Switch Weapons**
- **Talk** to someone during combat
- **Special Ability** = (GM Discretion)
  - **Attack** a second time
  - **Cast** a Spell
  - **Use** an Item
- Any other **minor** type of action

Step 5: Continue following **Initiative Turn Order** until all combatants are cleared from the battlefield.

Legal Section

Authored by: Curt Simcox

Illustrations by: Google Gemini AI Image Generation

GATEWAY is a "Ruleset" that incorporates mechanics and terminology that can also be found in Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition® SRD, including Character Traits/Skills, Armor Class, Combat Options, Saving Throws, Advantage/Disadvantage, and Difficulty Class. This ruleset is freely available with no profit and is intended to complement, rather than replace Wizards of the Coast's® products. It serves as a tool for introducing new players to the Tabletop RPG experience, with the potential to transition them to other systems such as Dungeons & Dragons®. To maintain respect for intellectual property rights, I will adhere to the Open-Source Agreement provided by Wizards of the Coast.

Open Game License:

THIS LICENSE IS APPROVED FOR GENERAL USE. PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE THIS LICENSE IS MADE BY WIZARDS OF THE COAST! OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d)"Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

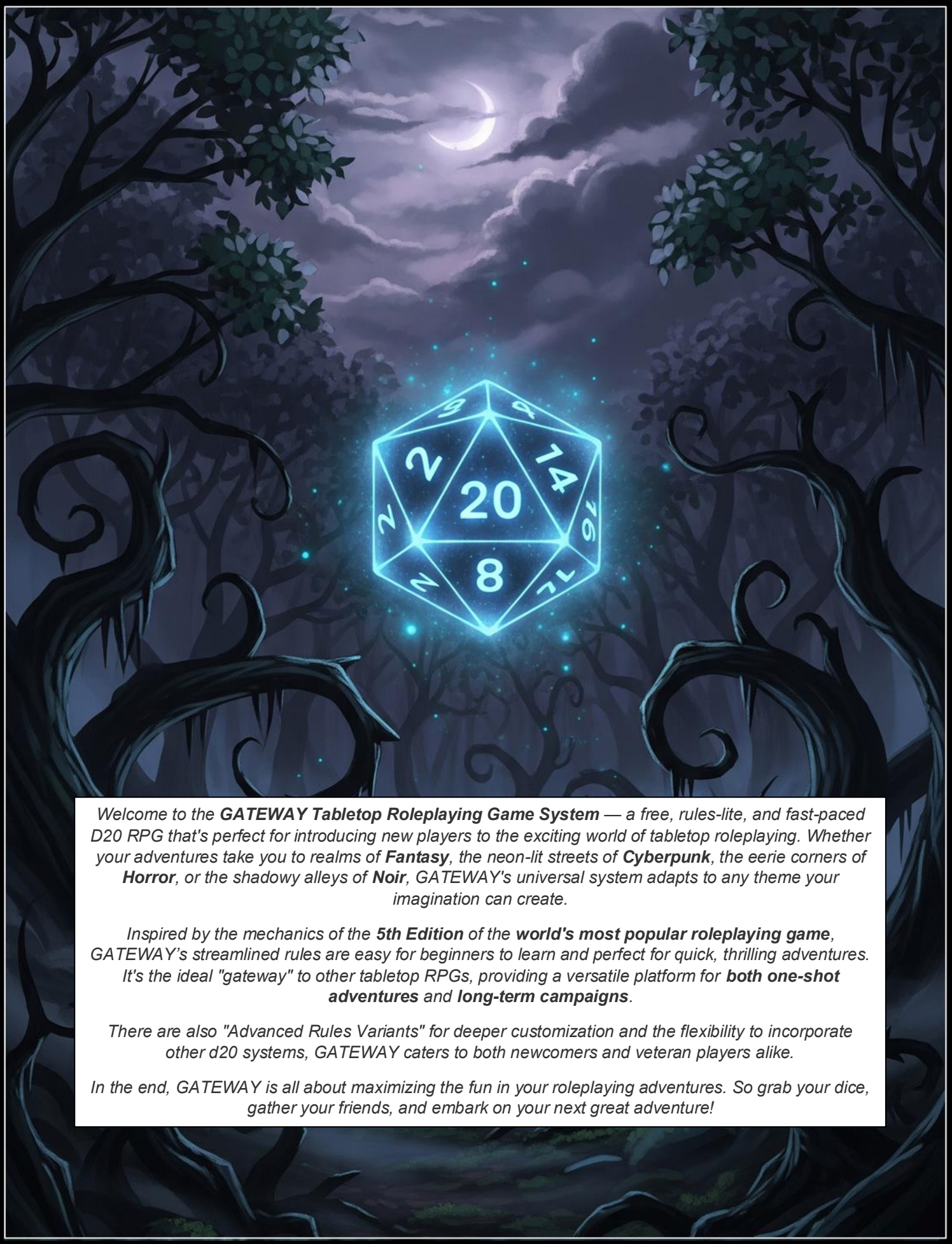
11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12 Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13 Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14 Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, LLC. System Reference Document 5.1 Copyright 2016, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Mike Mearls, Jeremy Crawford, Chris Perkins, Rodney Thompson, Peter Lee, James Wyatt, Robert J. Schwalb, Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Sims, and Steve Townshend, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.



*Welcome to the **GATEWAY Tabletop Roleplaying Game System** — a free, rules-lite, and fast-paced D20 RPG that's perfect for introducing new players to the exciting world of tabletop roleplaying. Whether your adventures take you to realms of **Fantasy**, the neon-lit streets of **Cyberpunk**, the eerie corners of **Horror**, or the shadowy alleys of **Noir**, GATEWAY's universal system adapts to any theme your imagination can create.*

*Inspired by the mechanics of the **5th Edition** of the **world's most popular roleplaying game**, GATEWAY's streamlined rules are easy for beginners to learn and perfect for quick, thrilling adventures. It's the ideal "gateway" to other tabletop RPGs, providing a versatile platform for **both one-shot adventures** and **long-term campaigns**.*

There are also "Advanced Rules Variants" for deeper customization and the flexibility to incorporate other d20 systems, GATEWAY caters to both newcomers and veteran players alike.

In the end, GATEWAY is all about maximizing the fun in your roleplaying adventures. So grab your dice, gather your friends, and embark on your next great adventure!